

RUGGED Walton and Hersham clung on desperately to a 'gift' fifth minute goal on Saturday, to send Wycombe Wanderers out of this year's F.A. Cup at the third qualifying stage.

For their brave fight-back in the second half, Wanderers fully deserved another crack at their opponents, and with any luck would be meeting them tonight (Tuesday) instead of St. Albans. But against a side like Walton, scoring goals is like stealing the crown jewels — and a lot more physical.

Wycombe's brave bid in the last half hour was met with some crunching defensive work by Walton and a poor standard of refereeing by Mr. D. F. Revell saw the match disintegrate.

Mr. Revell's leniency for the majority of the game meant it grew more physical every minute. Had he clamped down early on, several incidents could have been avoided. It would have also severely restricted Walton.

STUART EARP at Stompond Lane

As it was, he allowed the players a virtually free hand, which was gratefully accepted by Dave Bassett and Co. Bassett, a player in the true Peter Storey mould did much to upset Wycombe's efforts in the second half.

Yet the chances for Wycombe were created. The best of these fell to Tony Horseman in the 85th minute. Beating the off side trap, 'Bodger' had only goalkeeper Richard Teale to beat. But his shot was blocked and the opportunity of a replay went with it.

Horseman's miss, however, would not have been so vital had Wycombe keeper John Maskell not made a tragic error after only five minutes. Walton went straight into attack from the whistle, forcing three early corners in the first five minutes.

The first two flag kicks had the visitors' defence in all sorts of trouble. Taken by Willie Smith, the ball was curling viciously and into the full glare of

the sun. With the third corner, Smith floated the ball perfectly. John Maskell looked to have it covered but the ball went through his grasp and into the net.

It was just the start any side would have wanted. And Walton took full advantage. Every time they were in possession, the Wycombe back line looked edgy and nervous facing ever dangerous Roger Connell and the towering Keiron Somers.

Keith Searle broke the Walton monopoly in the tenth minute with a flick shot at the near post which Teale covered well. It was the start of a string of competent saves by the goalkeeper, who did much to save Walton in the later stages.

But even after a lonely moment of Wycombe pressure when Wanderers won their only corner of the half, Walton burst back with a breakaway and only poor finishing by Dave Morris saved the day for Wycombe.

Another Walton raid saw Johnny Hutchinson clear the

ball off the Blues goal-line from Clive Foskett after another corner. Walton in fact had nine corners in the first half to Wycombe's one. In the second half the corner ratio read Wycombe 7, Walton 1.

For all but the last ten minutes of the first half, Wycombe looked decidedly shaky. They were outmanoeuvred in midfield while front runners, Searle, Amos and Horseman were always struggling to match the penetration of the home forwards.

The defence was happy to boot the ball anywhere to relieve the pressure. Gerry Olson, given the unenviable task of marking Connell, had a hard time all afternoon while John Delaney saved his top form for the second half.

It was Connell who almost made it 2-0 on the half hour — again from a corner. The ball was only half cleared but Rundle and Maskell combined to force the ball away for another corner.

Wanderers at last began to hit

Walton & Hersham 1, Wycombe Wanderers 0

back and they came within inches of equalising when Searle found a way round the back of the defence. His shot was partially blocked and the ball ran agonisingly across the goalmouth. Pritchard dashed in but couldn't quite get his foot to the ball and the resulting cross was cut out by Teale.

Although Keiron Somers forced Maskell to dive full length two minutes later, Wycombe again at last began to give as good as they were getting. The stage was well set for the second half.

After a few minutes of the second period, the Walton aim was made obvious — survival at all costs. It was at this stage that the referee played such an important part in the proceedings. A firm line was needed early on — it didn't come and Walton took full advantage.

Apart from their physical challenge they were allowed to waste time frequently, including kicking the ball away before free kicks. Chris Lambert was,

in fact, eventually booked for time wasting — but in the last couple of minutes of the game.

To their credit, Wanderers kept their cool remarkably well with one or two exceptions. Keith Searle was lucky not to have been sent off for kicking Teale. His 'punishment' from the referee, who consulted the linesman, was merely a 'talking to.'

Whereas Walton had dominated the first half, so Wanderers took control on the second. Teale saved a Horseman free kick and then Delaney powered a header fractionally wide. It was the last time 'Big John', was to be allowed so much freedom inside the Walton box. On two further occasions, he was sent tumbling.

For the first time, Walton's defence, which has conceded only two goals at home all season, began to make errors. Donaldson and Bassett both gave away needless corners, and clearances from defence were

gobbled up by the hard working Gane and Pritchard.

Now was the time to strike. Had Wycombe been able to break through at this stage, they could have turned the game. Walton soon realised things were slipping away from them and with Bassett leading the way, they resorted to any way of halting the Wycombe attacks. In one flare-up Gane, Gamblin and Bassett were all cautioned by referee Revell but his words seemed to make little difference.

Walton's tactics succeeded in frustrating the Wanderers forwards who were seldom allowed enough room to work. Walton were content with breakaways through Connell and it was after one tussle with Olson that led to Maskell being booked. With Olson and Connell both on the floor, Maskell made a comment to the referee who took his name.

As the game approached the last quarter the tempo hotted up even more. Roy Thomas

had his name taken for a challenge on Hutchinson as Wycombe pressed strongly.

Their pressure looked to have paid off in the 86th minute. A clearance from the Walton defence saw their back line dash out desperately in a bid to catch the Wanderers off side. Horseman, however, was too quick for them and latching onto Ian Rundle's return ball he ran through unchallenged.

Teale was left coverless as Tony lined up his shot but the keeper ran out, spreading himself perfectly. The ball rebounded from his body to Hutchinson who put his shot wide.

Chris Lambert was booked for time wasting in the last minute but it seemed a small price to pay for a place in the next round.

WALTON: R. Teale, R. Thomas, C. Lambert, D. Donaldson, W. Smith, D. Bassett, D. Morris, C. Woffinden, R. Connell, K. Somers, C. Foskett, sub D. Ross (not used).

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell, I. Rundle, D. Gamblin, G. Olson, J. Delaney, A. Gane, A. Amos, L. Pritchard, K. Searle, A. Horseman, J. Hutchinson, sub R. Williams (not used).

Referee: D. F. Revell (Herts F.A.).
Half time: 1-0. **Goalscorer:** Walton — Smith (5).